

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Original) A toy, comprising:
a structural configuration including a portion thereof defining an animal restricted region; and
said structural configuration including an other portion defining an animal access region.
2. (Original) A toy according to claim 1, wherein said animal restricted region is created by provision of structure at least partially physically shielding said animal restricted region from access by a mouth of the animal.
3. (Currently amended) A toy according to claim 2, wherein said animal restricted region includes [[a]] at least one handle graspable by a hand of a human user.

4. (Original) A toy which inhibits user hand contact with animal saliva deposited on a play toy during interactive play by the animal and the user, comprising:

at least one structural portion being disposed in a position readily accessible by a mouth of the animal and by which the animal can hold the toy by retaining the at least one structural portion in the mouth;

at least one hand-holdable portion grippable by the user; and

a shielding portion arranged to at least partially discourage animal access to said at least one hand-holdable portion

5. (Withdrawn) A toy according to claim 4, wherein:

said at least one structural portion includes an elongated member extending along a toy axis;

said at least one hand-holdable portion includes at least one handle disposed at at least one of opposed ends of said elongated member; and

said shielding portion includes shielding structure extending at least partially about said at least one handle.

6. (Withdrawn) A toy according to claim 5, wherein said shielding structure includes a generally cup-shaped shield having open ends arranged to point outward of a central region of the toy in a direction of said toy axis.

7. (Withdrawn) A toy according to claim 6, wherein the shield includes cutouts therein.

8. (Withdrawn) A toy according to claim 5, wherein said at least one handle includes two handles disposed respectively at the opposed ends of said elongated member.

9. (Currently amended) A toy according to claim 4, wherein:
said at least one structural portion includes members disposed in circumferentially spaced apart positions about a toy axis and radially spaced apart therefrom;

said at least one hand-holdable portion is positioned radially inward of [[a]]
an outermost radial extent of said members.

10. (Currently amended) A toy according to claim 9, wherein said members include at least three members, at least a portion of each of the members extending longitudinally co-directional with said toy axis.

11. (Original) A toy according to claim 10, wherein said at least a portion of said three members which extend longitudinally are spaced apart circumferentially from one another by approximately equal angular intervals.

12. (Currently amended) A toy according to claim 10, wherein:
said at least one hand-holdable portion includes at least one handle of elongated dimension approximately aligned longitudinally with the toy axis; and
radially outward portions of the members are extended outward from a center of the toy in an axial direction such that said radially outward portions extend past an axial position of an inwardmost end of the handle, thereby at least partially shielding the handle.

13. (Original) A toy according to claim 12, wherein outermost edges of the members are shaped to collectively describe a generally spherical envelope.

14. (Original) A toy according to claim 13, wherein the toy is self-righting, such that when tossed onto a relatively horizontal support surface, the toy will come to rest with the at least one handle extending horizontally, and generally parallel with the support surface.

15. (Original) A toy according to claim 9, wherein the toy is formed integrally.

16. (Original) A toy according to claim 15, wherein the toy includes a resilient material.

17. (Original) A method of inhibiting user hand contact with animal saliva deposited on a play toy during interactive play by the animal and the user, comprising the steps of:

providing the toy with an animal access region readily available to gripping in a mouth of the animal; and

providing the toy with an animal restricted region which is less likely to be accessed by the mouth of the animal, said animal restricted region being hand-holdable by the user.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 17, further comprising:
grabbing the animal restricted region by the hand of the user; and
making the toy available to the animal so that at least a portion of the animal
access region is grippable in the mouth of the animal.

19. (New) A toy according to claim 3, wherein:
a toy axis passes through said at least one handle, said at least one handle
being accessible at least in a direction of said toy axis; and
said structure at least partially physically shielding said animal restricted
region from access by a mouth of the animal is at least partially defined by structural
portions of said animal access regions arranged to at least partially surround at least
a portion of an axial extent of said handle in such a manner as to discourage access
by a snout of an animal to said handle along said toy access based upon a radial size
thereof.

20. (New) A toy according to claim 19, wherein:
said handle is defined by an elongated member extending longitudinally
codirectional with said toy axis; and
said structural portions of said animal access regions which are arranged to
at least partially surround at least a portion of an axial extent of said handle are

extended outward from a center of the toy in an axial direction past an axial position of an inwardmost end of said at least one handle.